

WILD TIMES

KIDS MAGAZINE

SPRING 2018

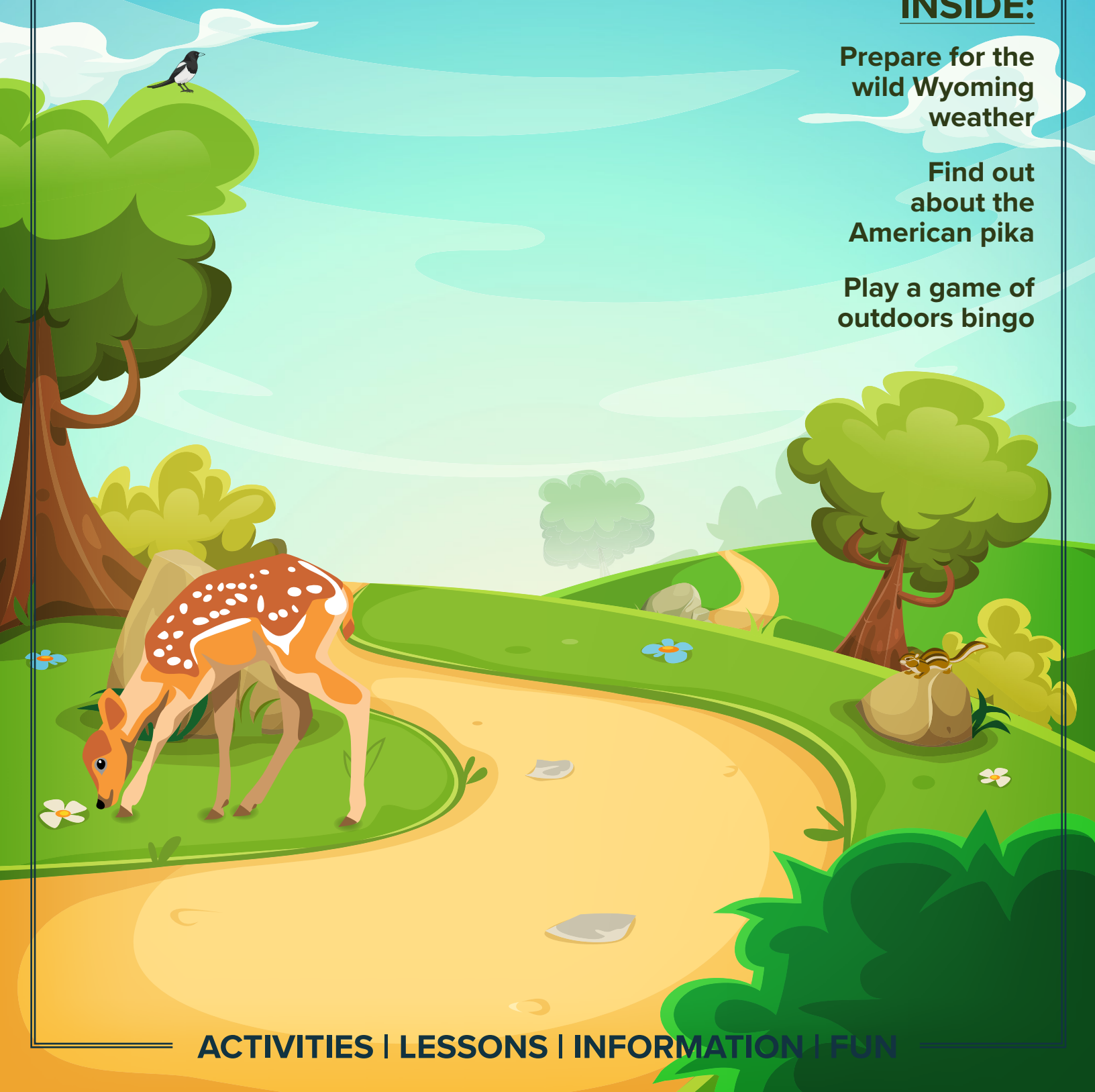


INSIDE:

Prepare for the
wild Wyoming
weather

Find out
about the
American pika

Play a game of
outdoors bingo



ACTIVITIES | LESSONS | INFORMATION | FUN

Be safe outside

It's exciting to be outdoors and explore new places. Wyoming has so many great places to experience close to where you live! June is National Safety Month, but safety is something to keep in mind in every habitat that you explore during any month of the year. On the plains, look out for tunnels that ground squirrels and prairie dogs dig-- they might cause you to twist an ankle. Also, prickly pear cacti can be everywhere. This cactus is a great food source for black-tailed prairie dogs, northern pocket gophers, rabbits, chipmunks, and more — just be careful not to sit on one or brush your leg against it! Be sure to check your clothes and skin for ticks when you leave the field and remove any that you find. The rocky landscape of mountains are perfect for pika to scurry around and for bighorn sheep to climb, but it can be dangerous to people so watch your step. Areas near rivers and lakes are a great place to see tons of wildlife and fish, just be aware that moose and bear like to hang out in the dense willows. It is always a good idea to enjoy a river or lake some distance from the edge so that you don't accidentally fall in. Getting soaked when you weren't planning to take a swim can be unpleasant and even a dangerous if it's cold outside.

Exploring the outdoors and looking for wildlife is a great activity, and part of the fun is learning to handle all of the challenges you might run into. Don't worry though- if you are well-prepared it should always be a safe and fun time!



Prepare for the unpredictable weather

By Teal Cufade
Game Warden

Wyoming weather can be unpredictable, but that shouldn't stop you from enjoying time recreating or working outdoors. As a warden, I have the responsibility to be outdoors patrolling no matter what the weather is like. Before I go out in the field, I always check the weather forecast. In each and every season, layering clothing is essential. I think the most important base layer (the clothing closest to your skin) is a good pair of socks. Just like the other base layers, I recommend socks that are made of wool. Leave your cotton socks at home; they will leave your feet sweaty and cold! In addition, I always carry an extra pair of socks. On top of wool socks, I choose a comfortable pair of water-resistant boots. After the base layers, I focus on adding clothing layers that are waterproof or water-resistant. On cold or bad weather days, I make sure my hands, head and ears are covered with gloves and a hat.

If I plan to be in the field for many hours, I always pack a small first aid kit, plenty of water, a snack, waterproof matches and a flashlight. Be sure to bring the first aid kit with you- your first aid kit will not do you any good if it is left in your car or truck while you are in the field. Before you leave for an outdoor adventure you should always tell someone where you plan to go during the day and when you plan to be back. You should also ask permission from your parent or another adult before going on an outdoor adventure, and it is a good idea to go with at least one other person for safety.

While you are outside, it is always



Above: Teal Cufade scouts the horizon for movement as part of her work as a game warden for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. Before heading into the field, she makes sure to check the forecast and dress in multiple layers for safety. Left: Teal shows off the parts of a firearm.

(Photos by WGFD)



important to be aware and respectful of wildlife and their habitats. During the spring and summer, many wild animals are having babies. If you stumble across a baby animal, give it space. The moth-

er is likely nearby feeding for the day and could be protective. Don't worry; she will come back to care for her baby if you leave the area.

When I'm in areas where I might run into big animals like bears, mountain lions or moose, I make sure to have bear spray with me. If I am surprised by one of these animals, I want to be able to defend myself with bear spray. Giving wildlife space is always the best plan, but if that doesn't work you want to be prepared with bear spray. Even though it is called "bear spray," it can be used to protect you from any wildlife that becomes dangerous.

WILDLIFE PROFILES



American pika (*Ochotona princeps*)

Range: Pikas are found on the rocky slopes of mountains in Western North America, including most of the mountain ranges in Wyoming.

Size: Also known as “rock rabbits,” pikas are most closely related to hares and look like a tiny, short-eared rabbit. They weigh about half a pound (6 ounces).

Habitat: Most often pikas live on rocky slopes — called talus fields — above 8,000 feet of elevation.

Young: Females usually raise one successful litter of three baby pikas per year.

Predators: Pikas can be eaten by eagles, hawks, coyotes, bobcats, foxes and weasels. This is a protected non-game species in Wyoming which means

that you can't hunt them.

Food: The american pika is an herbivore, meaning they eat plants only. In Wyoming, pika eat grasses, leafy plants called forbs, shrubs and sometimes pine or fir tree twigs, moss and lichen.

Did you know? The pika is very vocal and will give an alarm call to warn neighbors of nearby predators. Unlike most mammals living in the mountains, pikas do not migrate (travel to somewhere warmer) or hibernate (curl up in a safe place and stay there until winter ends) in the winter. Pikas stay active all winter, usually under the snow, and feed on food caches known as “haypiles” that they stash away during the summer months.

WILDLIFE PROFILES



(Photo by Fredlyfish4)

Orangethroat darter (*Etheostoma spectabile*)

Range: This darter can be found in streams and rivers from western Ohio to the Rocky Mountains in Wyoming. It's especially common on the eastern plains of Wyoming.

Size: Adult orangethroat darters are usually about two and a half inches long.

Habitat: This fish is mostly found in small streams with sand or gravel bottoms, but can sometimes be found along the shorelines of small lakes.

Young: Female orangethroat darters can lay up to 200 eggs at a time, and they can start laying eggs after they are a year old. Although all of these eggs do not survive and hatch, a good number of them do.

Predators: These fish can be eaten by larger fish such as trout or bass. In eastern Wyoming, northern pike were found in the Niobrara river where they shouldn't naturally be. These pike can eat a large number of smaller fish, including orangethroat darters.

Food: Orangethroat darters mainly eat fly larvae and other insects.

Did you know? Life in a prairie stream can be tough! The orangethroat darters must get creative to survive when the summer rolls around and these streams almost completely dry up. These fish are tough and can survive in very warm shallow pools with not much oxygen until the streams flood again.

AROUND WYOMING



A favorite activity of past expos, the canoe pond will return this year. The pond lets kids of all ages get a taste of what it is like to canoe across a lake. (Photo by WGFD)

Wyoming Outdoor Expo open May 17-19

Plan to have fun this May at the Wyoming Outdoor Expo! It's free and open to the public on May 17, 18, and 19 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Casper Events Center. The Expo will have a lot of opportunities to learn about exploring the great outdoors and being safe while doing it. People from Game and Fish, State Parks and other organizations will

be teaching hands-on lessons about boating safety, hunting safety tips, bear safety, wildlife tracking, the life cycle of fish, birdwatching, wildlife migration, how to go camping, and more!

If you live near Lander, the Wyoming Outdoor Weekend at the Lander Community Center will also have many activities similar

to those at the expo in Casper. The Outdoor Weekend is open to the public on May 18 from 3 p.m.-8 p.m. and on May 19 from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Lander Community Center.

Whether you visit Casper or Lander, bring your family for a few fun days of learning about the great outdoor opportunities we have in Wyoming!

OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

Become a nature detective



So much is changing in the outdoors during the springtime. Get an up-close and personal to look at it while being a nature detective!

Grab a magnifying glass and be sure to dress for the weather. Then head outside to investigate all of the little things you can find by looking through your magnifying glass. You may notice more than what you normally see!

Try looking at:

- Rocks
- Trees
- Plants
- Dirt
- Scat (animal poop)
- Tracks
- Fur
- Moss
- A puddle or stream
- Insects

Ask yourself:

- What colors do you see?
- What textures do you see or feel?
- Has this been here for a long or short time?
- Is it alive?
- Is it wet or dry?
- Do you think anyone else has seen this before?
- Would wildlife use this?

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

BINGO

FROG OR TOAD	ASPEN TREE	BODY OF WATER	ANIMAL TRACK	BIRD FEATHER
WORM OR BUG UNDER A ROCK	WHITE FLOWER	SAGEBRUSH	BUTTERFLY OR MOTH	INSECT LIVING IN THE WATER
MOUNTAIN	STREAM OR RIVER	★	PRONGHORN	PINE CONE
CACTUS	RABBIT	EVERGREEN TREE	YELLOW FLOWER	SHINY ROCK
ANTLER	SMOOTH ROCK	A BIRD	BIRD NEST	SQUIRREL

NATURE BINGO

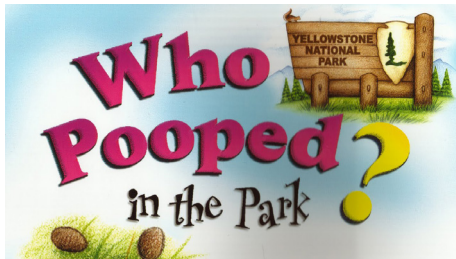
See if you can spot these items when you are exploring the outdoors. Mark off the space when you see each item. If you can get five in a row (either across, up and down, or diagonally) you win! For "extra credit" see if you can find them all!



CUT ME OUT AND TAKE ME WITH YOU ON YOUR ADVENTURE!

LEARNING LINKS

Books to check out



Who Pooped in the Park? Yellowstone National Park: Scat and Tracks for Kids by Gary D. Robson

Learn about the animals in Yellowstone from their scats (poop) and tracks (footprints). This book follows a family who find signs of bison, moose, elk, deer, rabbits, wolves, mountain lions, badgers and more.

The book also includes a handy reference chart with silhouettes, tracks, scats and comments for all of the animals.



Volume 12, No. 2

Spring 2018

Editor/writer: Ashley Andersen Leonard

Design: Justin Joiner

Additional editors and contributors:

Teal Cufau, Sara DiRienzo, Grant Frost, Steve Tessman

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department receives financial assistance in Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration. Under title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information please write to: Department of Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Human Resources, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Mail stop: 2000, Arlington, Virginia 22203.